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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The Viet Cong launched two attacks in the coastal province of Quang Tin early yesterday.

A predawn mortar raid against a fuel storage area in Tam Ky destroyed nearly 40,000 gallons of petroleum products and killed one South Vietnamese. A one-hour attack by an enemy force of unknown size against a South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) position near Tam Ky resulted in friendly casualties of 34 killed and 39 wounded. ARVN troops, supported by heavy allied artillery fire, killed a total of 25 Communist soldiers in the clash.

According to a delayed report, a group of approximately 150 North Vietnamese soldiers was spotted moving south through the western part of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) by a US airborne observer on 12 December. A subsequent allied air strike killed 120 of the group. This report follows previous reports indicating that infiltration into South Vietnam via the DMZ is continuing.

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Belgium - Congo (Kinshasa): Belgo-Congolese relations, which had recently shown signs of improvement, seem once again to be cooling.

Congo President Mobutu broke off negotiations with Belgian business interests abruptly on 1 December, just before the scheduled signing of a far-reaching agreement between the Congo and the Union Miniere mining concern. The Congo is now insisting that the mining company transfer its headquarters and administration of all its assets from Brussels to Kinshasa by 1 January. The company will agree to direct only its Congolese operations from Kinshasa. Union Miniere has indicated that it would try to cooperate and to maintain production even if Mobutu enforces the 1 January deadline by moving the Congolese Army into the mines and refineries.

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[redacted] Congolese cabinet ministers Bomboko and Nendaka fought hard to maintain the agreed Congo - Union Miniere settlement, but were defeated by young zealots who want to assert the Congo's "independence" even at the risk of damaging the economy. Mobutu has, however, backed off from confrontations with the Belgians before and may do so this time. Mobutu's actions may depend on Bomboko's assessment of Belgian intentions during his visit to Brussels, which began on 12 December. [redacted]

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NOTES

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Burundi: President Micombero may now be facing trouble in his army. Rumors are circulating in Bujumbura that he is thinking of arresting [] at least one--and perhaps several--high-ranking officers. These officers are said to be disgruntled at being passed over for promotion and unhappy with the overthrow of the monarchy. The loyalty of the army is reported to be divided between Micombero and the dissidents. []

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Venezuela: Army pressure was an important factor behind President Leoni's decision to suspend constitutional guarantees on Tuesday. Yesterday the army occupied Central University, which has long been a haven for Communist terrorists because of its immunity from government intervention. The authorities reportedly have detained some 200 students and captured some small arms. Thus far public reaction has been generally favorable, but the students will probably resist the government's move. []

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